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ABSTRACT

The paper traces the history of special education programs for gifted students in Taiwan and describes the current goals and nature of gifted programs. Four areas of support from the Ministry of Education are noted: program design, teacher education, resources (publications and instructional materials), and research. The identification procedure emphasizes group and individual intelligence tests as well as teacher recommendations. Examples of school and private agency programs are cited, and a concluding section addresses the future of gifted education. (CL)

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Gifted and Talented Education in The Republic of China

Paper presented at
the Fourth World Conference
on Gifted and Talented Children

Montreal, Quebec, Canada
August 21-25, 1981

By

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF GIFTED EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

During the Three Dynasties (2205 BC-249 BC) the Chinese began educating their youth in formal settings. The government instituted education for the purpose of training and selecting men for administrative positions. This process was completed by the early Han period (206 BC-7 A.D.) with the introduction of the civil service examination based on the study of classical literature. Although abandoned at times during the later periods, the T'ang Dynasty (618–906) reintroducted the examination system for selection of administrators. By the Sung Dynasty (960–1276) major reforms were instituted in the examination system to develop practical training for leaders of the country; colleges of law, medicine and military affairs were improved and provincial schools were established in every prefecture and subprefecture. The moral teachings of neo-Confucianism were originated during this period, but did not reach their full impact until 1500. By 1500 A.D., then, certain major modern characteristics of Chinese education were incorporated into the main-stream. The use of examination was considered essential for the selection of the most qualified leaders. Confucian morality was considered a correct value to be taught in schools and the value of practical education was accepted as a worthy goal along with classical studies.

Prior to the overthrow of the Ching Dynasty (1644–1911), Chinese were aware of the growth of western technology and science. This knowledge, combined with western involvement with China during the 18th and 19th century, led many Chinese to work and study abroad. Notable among them was Dr. Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Republic of China, whose education serves as an example of the results of involvement with outside cultures. These opportunities set the stage for the rise of modern China. With the overthrow of the Ching regime the force for change and modernization became the dominant voice in China. Education was seen by many as the method to attain modernization.

With the founding of the Republic of China the growth of education was accelerated. It was the hope of the founding Republican government and noted in the constitution that the opportunities for learning would be extended to all on an equitable basis, but that gifted people be given special training. In this manner the modernization of China could move at a fast pace. The reorganization of China during the 1920's and final consolidation in 1928 was immediately threatened by Japanese expansionism, which reduced the ability to implement many of the educational programs. After the Second World War, the Central Government was removed to Taiwan during the Communist revolts, which again slowed the development of education for children. Recently, the educational system has progressed with the institutionalization of compulsory education through the 9th Grade in 1968. A full array of schooling is available for students from the kindergarten to the Ph. D. In addition there are special programs in business, technology, arts, maritime, and agriculture in vocational schools and colleges.

The rapid advance in living standards and technology in the Republic of China has brought expectations and concerns related to its economic and social success. The special leadership skills and advanced learning needed by a technological society have been widely discussed. In response, the Ministry of Education has asked that experimental programs be designed to explore the needs of the gifted population and the manner of developing this population's full potential.

In 1972 the Ministry of Education developed regulations and funding for experimental gifted programs on the elementary level.

In 1979 the first seven year cycle of experiments in elementary schools was completed. A new program was designed and the gifted of the junior high schools were incorporated into the program.

Programs have also been designed for pupils with the talents. Two elementary schools in Taichung and one in Taipei started music instructions and programs for the musically talented children in self-contained special classes in 1973. In 1981 fine arts and crafts programs were incorporated into the gifted education program. The talented students' abilities that would be developed now include fine arts, music and dance.

THE GOALS OF GIFTED EDUCATION

Six goals were specified in the experimental gifted programs:

1. to understand characteristics of gifted children.
2. to develop the potential of gifted children.
3. to enrich the curriculum.
4. to cultivate good living habits and healthy personalities.
5. to reach for high cognitive achievement.
6. to experiment to find effective ways to aid gifted children.

A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF GIFTED EDUCATION

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS IN TAIWAN, R.O.C.

		Taipei City	Kaohsiung City	Taipei County	Taichung County	Taichung City	Chang-Hwa County	Tainan County	Tainan City	Pintung County	King-Ming County
Junior High School	Classes	7	10	6	2	14	2	2	2	—	—
	Students	246	295	149	60	532	60	60	64	—	—
Elementary School	Classes	32	20	7	5	22	7	12	14	2	2
	Students	1134	508	220	81	621	197	163	325	24	71

CLASSROOM PATTERNS

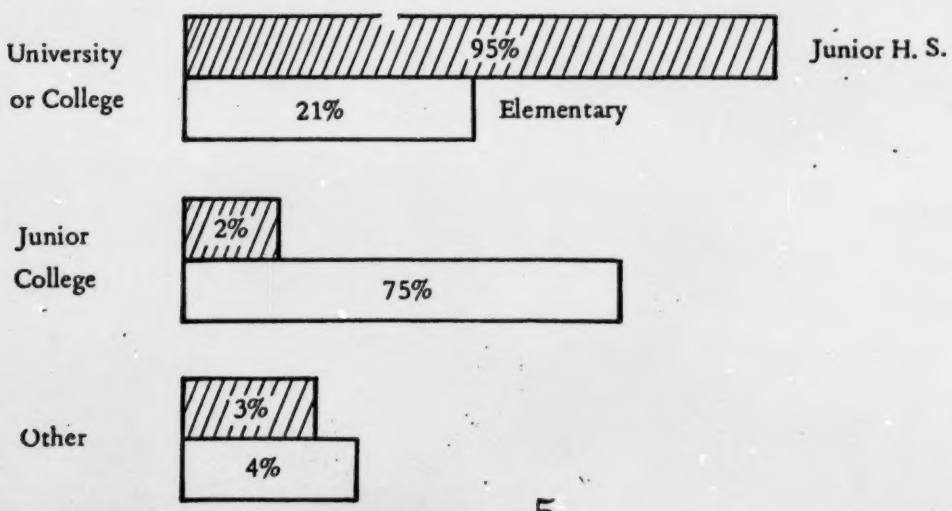
		Elementary Classes	Elementary Students	Junior H. S. Classes	Junior H. S. Students	Total Classes	Total Students
Gifted Students	General Ability	97	2361	21	641	125	3198
	Special Academic Ability	–	–	6	196	45	1612
Tatented Students	Fine Arts	1	27	3	98	4	125
	Music	24	901	14	501	38	1402
	Other	2	55	1	30	3	85
Total		124	3344	45	1466	169	4810

EXPERIMENTAL PATTERNS OF CLASSES

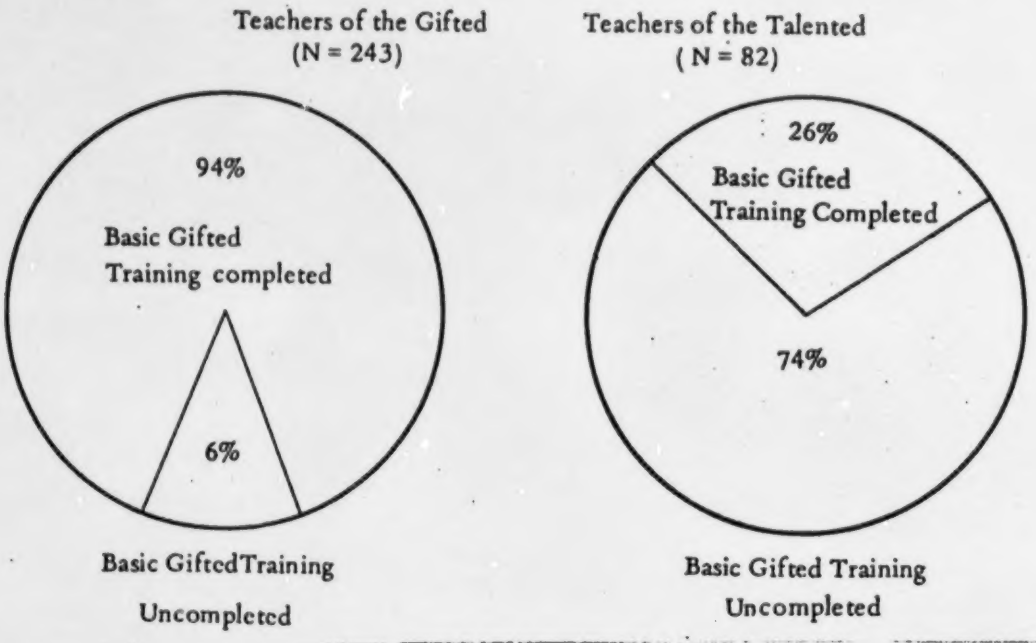
Type	Self-Contained Classes	Self-Contained Students	Resource (Part-Time Curriculum) Classes	Resource (Part-Time Curriculum) Students
Elementary	96	2813	28	531
Junior High School	33	1113	12	353
Total	129	3926	40	884

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF TEACHERS

Graduates

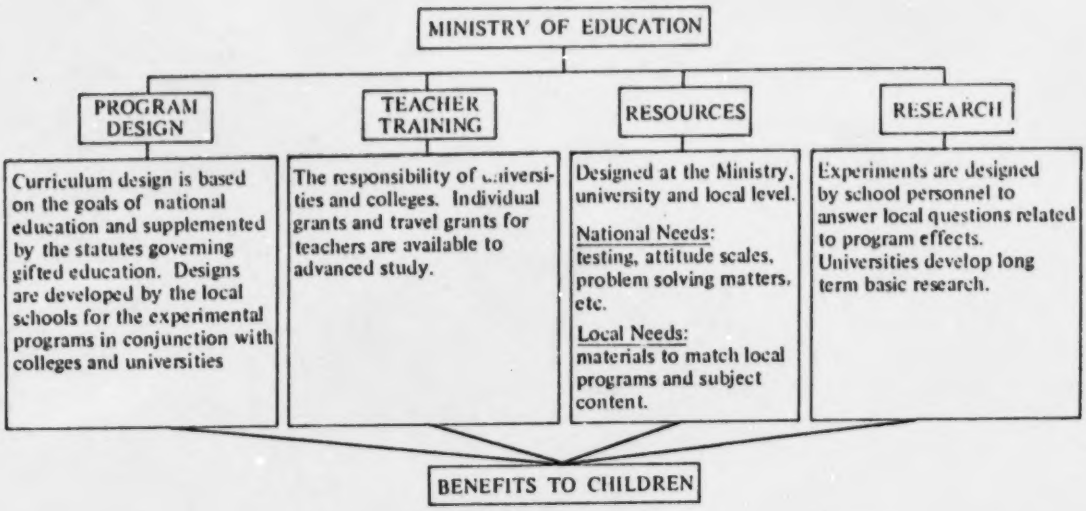


BASIC GIFTED TRAINING OF TEACHERS



SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Any program needs the encouragement and material support of the government and people to become successful. The Ministry of Education has developed a plan for the establishment of a program for gifted children through a combination of materials, training, curriculum design, research support and a free flow of this information through various meetings and activities. The establishment of these components was the first step in the delivery of services to gifted children and represents the involvement of all parts of the school system, a goal of the Ministry of Education. Resources for the development of the children's capabilities have been for the purpose of involvement of local school programs to international exchanges. The variety of strategies employed by the Ministry of Education to provide resources for development of children's capacities include curriculum design, teacher training, resources and research. The flow chart below indicates four areas of support emanating from the Ministry of Education.


MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM DESIGN
TEACHER TRAINING
RESOURCES
RESEARCH
Curriculum design is based on the goals of national education and supplemented by the statutes governing gifted education. Designs are developed by the local schools for the experimental programs in conjunction with colleges and universities
The responsibility of universities and colleges. Individual grants and travel grants for teachers are available to advanced study.
Designed at the Ministry, university and local level.
National Needs:
testing, attitude scales, problem solving matters, etc.
Local Needs:
materials to match local programs and subject content.
Experiments are designed by school personnel to answer local questions related to program effects.
Universities develop long term basic research.
BENEFITS TO CHILDREN

Each one of these dimensions is discussed in the succeeding sections.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The educational system of the Republic of China is a centralized system and has governmental agencies that reflect national, provincial and local legislative units. People interested in Gifted Education are at the national, regional and local level and often cooperate with their governmental counterpart. In 1981 the Special Education Association began a division of gifted education. This division has become a base and meeting place for government and private activities.

Meetings of specialists and parties interested in gifted education are held on a national, regional and local level. The second national meeting, for example, was held at National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei where administrators, teachers, central government personnel and university professors gathered to hear reports on the advances in schools and listened to specialists in the fields. The meeting was designed to address major issues facing the Republic of China in the development of gifted programs and offer smaller groups time for special interests. The topics at that conference ranged from the Equal Opportunity of Education and discussions on acceleration to summer programs, evaluation and follow-up studies. Special interest groups included guidance; special talents, such as art and music; administration

of programs; and curriculum development. At the regional levels the institutional responsibility for leadership of gifted education rests with designated universities and colleges situated in those regions of the province. During the meetings of the regional groups, problems of identification, student performance levels, teaching materials, and other concerns are discussed. New ideas, governmental regulations and programs for the future are introduced. For example, at a recent meeting at Ping-Tung Junior Normal College, the officials of the Ministry of Education introduced the extension of the experimental programs in gifted education to Music, the Fine Arts and the Visual Arts. These additions broaden the field of gifted and permit the develop of more schools with experience in the area of gifted education.

At the international level the Republic of China has maintained contacts with national and international programs through attending meetings and reporting on the progress of gifted education and findings of research in the field of gifted education. In addition, the Ministry of Education systematically sends review teams to foreign countries to evaluate programs, talk to educational leaders and learn about the most recent research in those countries.

TEACHER TRAINING

The Republic of China has provided resources for the development of the special programs related to gifted education. A primary commitment has been the increase of trained teachers available for the implementation of gifted programs. This increase of specialists has reduced the normal student-teacher ratio in gifted classrooms from 50 to 60 students for each teacher to 25 to 30 students. The commitment of the government to reduce the ratio of students to teachers is an important first step toward the development of an workable program.

Funding for teacher training includes both short term and long term support with funds going to the regionally responsible institution of higher learning. A certified gifted education teacher must complete 16 credit hours in the field of gifted education. Programs for teachers include weekend workshops, week programs, summer programs. Also the staff of the ministry and faculty at colleges and universities are retrained regularly at colleges and universities overseas through funding from the Ministry of Education. All of these opportunities are to broaden and deepen the expertise of teachers and support personnel in the Republic of China. Since the ultimate success of the gifted program rests on the teachers and the support of the administration, signigicant time, money and energy has gone into this training.

RESOURCES

Along with the funds provided to reduce the student-teacher ratio, each school receives funds for the development of resources for students in the programs. The decision for the use of these funds rest with the local school administration who by consulting with the teachers in the program develop a plan for the use and expenditure of the money. Examples of the use of these local funds would include the upgrading of the facilities for teaching such as classrooms and reading rooms for gifted students, the purchase of advanced library materials and research apparatus, and the planning of special events and activities not provided in the regular curriculum of the school. In addition, funds are used to design locally oriented curriculum, materials to supplement the materials developed by the universities and publishers. Most local materials reflect the area of emphasis developed by the school and the interests of individual teachers. These materials are combined with the national curriculum and materials produced externally to form the gifted curriculum materials. These funds are provided on a yearly basis for the continued upgrading of the program. The provision of the funds given to the schools has been for the development of different learning settings and the development of curriculum materials.

There are numerous publications in the Republic of China in education and some are directly related to the study of gifted education. Some are related to specific conferences or published as supplementary classroom materials while others are regular publications. Of the later category, two need to be mentioned. **Gifted Education Quarterly** is a journal of recent findings of research and practices in the Republic of China and an analysis of trends in this country. A sampling of recent article titles include: "Assessment of Gifted and Underachivement"; "Moral Judgement of Gifted Children"; "A Special Experience for Gifted Children-Sunshine Summer Camp in 1980"; and "Guiding Extra Curricular Activities of Special Classes for the Gifted Students". The journal is edited and circulated through the Special Education Center, National Taiwan Normal University. A second important publication is an Annual Publication of the Ministry of Education entitled **Gifted Children's Education: Experimental Research.** Topics covered include models of teaching behavior, analysis of test content and anxiety factors in children's learning. The 1980 edition is the seventh annual publication. In addition to these regularly published materials, other materials have been published related to specific needs: **Teaching for Creativity Thinking and Affective Behavior**, Kaohsiung Teachers College, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, June, 1980. **Directions for Problem Solving** (Mathematics), Ping-Tung Junior Normal College, Ping-Tung, Taiwan, June, 1981.

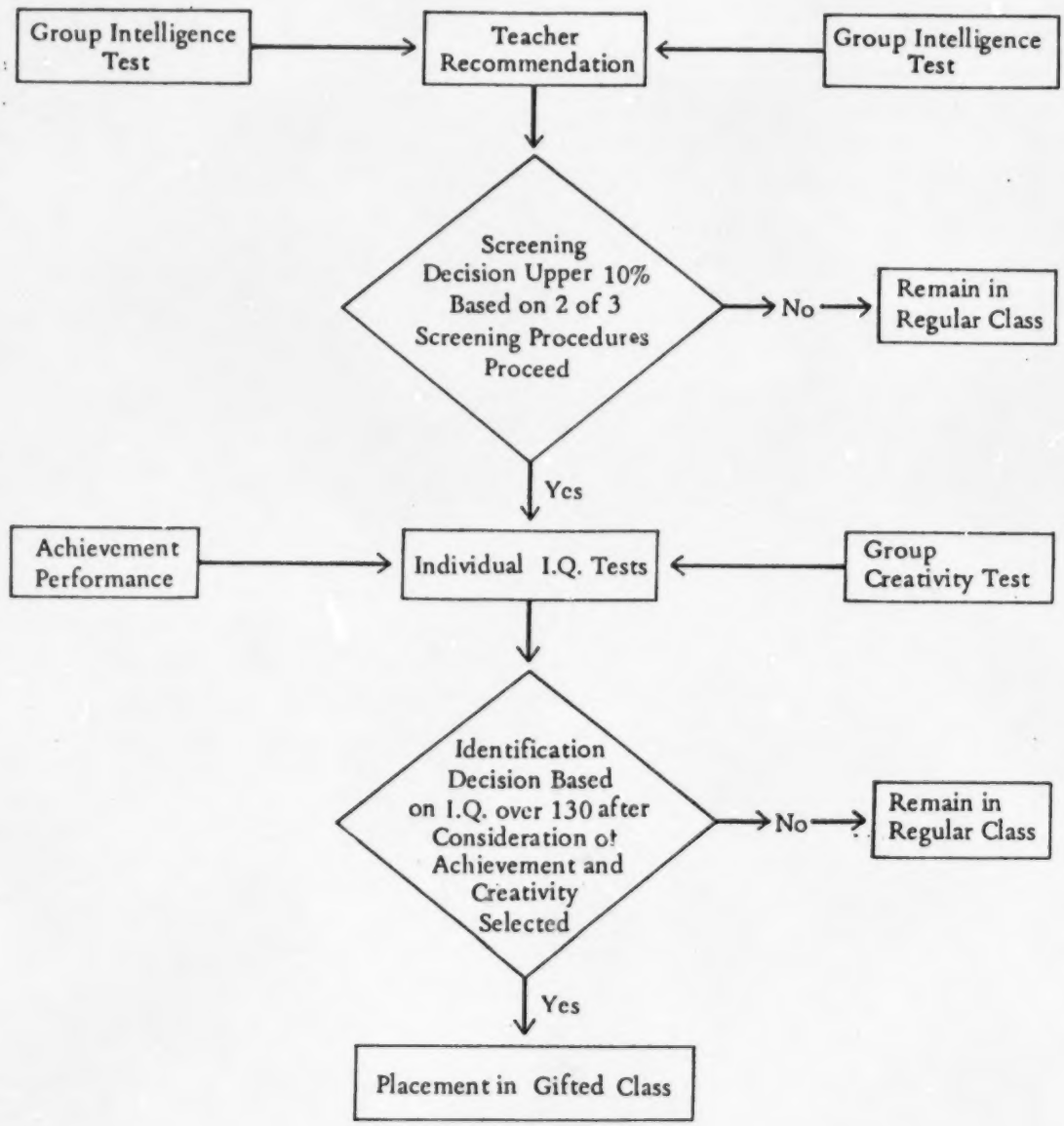
RESEARCH

Research is performed in basic and applied areas. Schools perform applied research for the analysis of student performance on testing, anxiety and the effects of specific programs on student leadership or growth.

University research often evaluates national trends in gifted education, levels of teacher education, the impact of programs on attitudes and aptitude of students. Research has developed in direct response to the emphasis placed on gifted programs. From a limited inquiry into the qualities of gifted education ten years ago, research in the area has developed to evaluation many key questions of gifted education.

IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Identification process of elementary and junior high school programs involves a screening process and an identification procedure based on multiple instrumentation. The chart below outlines the procedure used in the Republic of China.



AN EXAMPLE OF GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

—— IN TAIPEI JONG–SHIAW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ——

The principles of instructions in the program for the gifted are: (1) to deepen, (2) to broaden the teaching materials, and (3) to adopt the creative teaching methods in the classrooms. For deepening the materials, more analyses in construction and grammer have been done in Chinese and English classes; supplementary materials, those which are related to the topics in the textbooks, are also provided in Math and Science classes. Flexible teaching methods, for example, teaching by students themselves, debates, discussions, group creating, experiments, dramas, contests, games are selected to stimulate interests and creativity in students. Most of the time, teachers only play a role as a guide to record student performances and discuss with them later.

In order to provide a better learning environment, classrooms are arranged next to the library and resource room which has information, books in different areas and has space for free discussion. Some special topic research has been accomplished by the gifted students besides the regular activities. A report on "the community research in the school area" and the survey on "the plants on campus" presented with the written papers, pictures, specimen, and profiles have both been admirably done.

Two instruction emulation workshops have been held this semester for the purpose of improving teaching techniques. In the Math class, two formulae were discovered after searching on "the Magic Block". Some students suggested during the group discussions that more kinds of magic blocks could be created by using materials, such as paper boards, plastic paper, sticks, straws, etc. The "puppet show" was used to motivate students' learning and to demonstrate how learning by doing can be achieved in an English class.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Several private organizations including Education & Culture Foundation, Children's Center, YWCA, YMCA, Family-help Center, set up programs each year which provide leisure time activities for gifted children, especially during the summer time. The Chinese Youth Summer Camp, Audio-visual Library, Learning Camp, Recreation Camp,

Chorus and Orchestra Clubs were among the programs sponsored by these organizations in the past.

More specific activities in these progms include visiting museums, memorial halls, astronomical observatories; Chinese and English courses, picnicking, watching cartoons, puppet shows; music, art and Chinese writing activities; craft, swimming courses as well as visiting TV companies, etc.

In the Audio-Visual Library, for example, children can study with audio-visual aids: listen to music, read fairy tales, watch cartoons in the reading rooms. The Chorus and Orchestra Clubs, are organized by the college students majoring in arts and music, providing children with opportunities to develop their special talents.

THE FUTURE OF GIFTED EDUCATION

The immediate goals of gifted education are to deepen and broaden the expertise and materials available to the school. The richness of materials necessary to sustain sophsiticated program from early education through junior high school are being developed and field tested by universities and school teachers across the island. Rural and urban schools that are members of the experimental programs continue to develop materials in their special interest areas with the intent of producing a clear, usable curriculum for gifted students. Concurrently, teachers, administrators, university personnel and government educational officers are being trained to understand, develop and direct programs for the gifted. These leaders will guide the programs for the gifted in the near future.

The long term goals of gifted education include the establishment of programs for academically talented students in all areas of the country that meet the national need of well educated future leaders. In addition, a broad program of talent development is desired by the nation's leadership and the community to foster the growth of Chinese culture and a broad view of western culture. Any program will encounter problems and difficulties in the establishment and daily carrying out of its goals.

In Taiwan, there are certain qualities of the programs that reflect social and traditional problems. For example, some schools are situated in large urban areas with access to people, materials and cultural events while other are located in the mountains four hours by bus from any major population or cultural center. The problems facing teachers in these two settings are significantly different and call on values, behaviors and resources that are quite

varied. Second, the growth of the economical and social life of Taiwan has been mirrored in the dramatic rise in the level of schooling. Many children's education far exceeds their parents', causing some turmoil in the variation of understanding and values.

The use of examination for placement in high school programs influences Junior High School program content. Alternatives to testing have seem created and the testing issue remains problematic for schools in the Republic of China.

Numerous studies have supported the use of acceleration as a method of advancement for intelligent students. The gifted education experimental program have developed various programs to test models of acceleration including summer programs and reassignment of students to advanced classes. Discussions surrounding this issue have focused on the impact on accelerated children, and the effect of wide spread use of acceleration on schools.

Experimentation in gifted education has also included studies in self-contained and mainstreamed programs. At present there is no data supporting one program technique or the other. However, the implementation of mainstreaming program has been supported by some educators because of limited availability of funds for supplemental teachers and materials required in the self-contained program.

Programmatic evaluation has remained at a low level of implementation. Most evaluations have been carried out through visits and self-reports of schools. Some systematic evaluations have been suggested and planned; however, they need to beimplemented in the very near future.

A final difficulty is the integration of programs from the elementary level through the high school level. With the recent implementation of junior high school programs and integration of the two programs this difficulty may be overcome.

Based on past successes the future of gifted education in the Republic of China looks bright. A farsighted attempt to establish social programs for children needing services should assure the goal of gifted education.

APPENDIX: STATUTES

Constitution

Article 159: Everyone in the Republic of China has an equal right to education.

The Statute of Compulsory Education

Article 3: . . . For the gifted children in the elementary school, the time of enrollment can be shortened by one year . . . .

Article 14: The gifted, the handicapped, the mentally retarded, and children with character or behavioral disorders in the elementary and junior high schools are to receive exceptional education or industrial art and vocational training. The policies for these groups are determined by the Ministry of Education.

The Statute of Senior High School Education

Article 8: The students in Senior High School ought to be guided according to their capacities, aptitudes and interests. Special guidance should be given to the gifted students in senior high school. The time of enrollment can be shortened in accordance with achievement.

The Statute of College Education

Article 31: Those whose academic achievements are superior and who have all the requirements and credits fulfilled one semester or one academic year before the regular time should be allowed to graduate.